

Two College Professors and a Corporate CEO Walk Into a Bar...

Reflective Essay for ePortfolio

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MHE670 Capstone: Advanced Management Seminar

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Two college professors and a Corporate CEO walk into a bar and ask for three beers.

The bartender pours the CEO a beer, glances over at the other two and says,

“We don’t serve professors here.” The professors ask ‘Why not?’”

The bartender replies, “A mind is a terrible thing to waste.”

A mind is a terrible thing to waste and this is a primary reason why I like to learn.

Introduction to my ePortfolio I invite you to open this descriptive reflection up in a window or tab and in another window or tab open my portfolio. This way, you can read along and view my portfolio examples simultaneously. The ePortfolio reflection exercise was quite labor intensive. However, all along the program, I collected and added examples of the work I had accomplished and stored it within [an external website which can also be viewed here](#).

Why did I enroll in this program? I enrolled in this program for a couple of reasons. The first quite frankly was, that I did not want the benefit and opportunity to learn, to slip past me. I did not want to leave this benefit “on the table” so to speak. As an employee of Bay Path University, I am entitled to take courses and enroll in programs of study free of charge. The second reason was that I wanted to experience this program from the Bay Path student perspective. Being an instructional designer I spend the vast majority of my day working with program directors and faculty creating online courses that are seen more from the faculty perspective. Working my way through this program has really enlightened me to 'seeing' how the Bay Path student sees an online program.

What specific ways have my personal and professional goals been met? Personally, I love to learn. I am a lifelong learner and I credit my parents for instilling in me the love of learning and curiosity to ask the questions necessary- when learning. If they were alive, they would both be very proud of my hard work, effort and the pursuit and completion of my second Masters degree.

When I frame my diploma, it will reside next to my BA and MA diplomas from The New School for Social Research and my Graduate Certification in Instructional Design that I earned from The University of Wisconsin/Stout. I am proud to claim all these degrees have been earned completely online starting way back in 1994.

Quite honestly when I started thinking about beginning a graduate program of studies, I had wanted to enroll in the MBA in Entrepreneurial Thinking and Innovative Practices degree. I thought I would be studying for fun and have a personal interest in entrepreneurial thinking. So, I thought this particular MBA would be my choice. However, after a discussion with my director, he advised me that the Masters in Higher Education Administration might be a better professional choice for my career.

Professionally I have learned how the administrative world works- or at least have gotten a glimpse-beyond what I see in my day-to-day work. Additionally, I have gained an historical perspective on higher administration has been fascinating as well.

In what ways will the completion of this program help move me along in my professional and personal journey? Professionally, I believe that being enrolled in this MHE program was beneficial when [this last Spring 2016] I asked for a title change in my position at Bay Path. Many factors, of course, were evident in the decision to change my title. However, being able to prove that I am studying higher education administration might have added to my Dean's final decision.

The learning I encountered within the courses; the Higher Education Curriculum Development, Foundations of Online Learning, Designing and Building Online Learning, and Building Online Learning Communities really impacted my daily work. These courses were especially helpful to me and have already proved as useful reference when working with faculty

colleagues and defending best online teaching and learning practices.

I also hope, both professionally and personally, to parlay this degree in my pursuit to teach online. I would like to continue to work with other students in mentoring them as they move along the learning continuum.

How has my learning in this program impacted my life? This program has already aided in my newest title change, as stated earlier. The work, studying, reading, researching, and learning all help keep my mind sharp [at least that is my hope].

Life Purpose

Right click the above title link, open in a new tab or window to view ePortfolio items I will be referring to as you read along.

Overall, not much has changed, from the entry Life Purpose Essay, written a couple years ago. I continue to believe a primary purpose in my life is to inspire others. I also still get great pleasure working with and inspiring my colleagues at work.

One aspect where I feel I have changed is in my professional goals. Yes, I continue to desire working as an Associate and perhaps as a Director of an Online Learning Department. However, after learning how the leadership and governance of higher education works, I am not 100% sure I want to enter that realm-on a permanent basis.

Instead, I would prefer to work on a freelance basis and apply my skills as a consultant-someone who might work temporarily-perhaps after retirement. Within these situations I envision offering my skills and talents to work on projects and teams that would later- once the work is complete- move onto the next project.

Expertise

Right click the above title link, open in a new tab or window to view ePortfolio items I will be

referring to as you read along.

Including my Certificate of Completion from The National Institutes of Health [NIH] showing the certification #2129844 is very important because obtaining it took quite an effort. The series of lessons, case studies and quizzes was intensive.

During the time I have been studying for this master degree a lot of changes have occurred in my professional work. Beginning July 1, 2016 my job title has changed to that of Instructional Designer. This title more accurately describes the work I do, on a daily basis, with the faculty and program directors I support.

In my email, I keep a folder called 'Kudos', inside of which I file all the thank you notes, emails and other digital evidence sent to me-in thanks for my work. It is a really nice reminder that those I work with really do appreciate my efforts. The example I included here, is typical in describing the type of digital evidence I have in my email 'Kudos' folder. Additionally, I have a stack of thank you cards and notes of appreciation, which I keep nearby my desk as a physical reminder.

Experience and Achievements

Right click the above title link, open in a new tab or window to view ePortfolio items I will be referring to as you read along.

Since I have worked at Bay Path University, I have been very fortunate to have opportunities to both attend professional conferences and also present. I have listed these within my ePortfolio in the Experience and Achievements section and these opportunities have offered me venues to meet with and exchange ideas. I feel these demonstrate my participation in activities that support my professional development.

I also served upon the Vision 2019 Committee and more specifically on the sub committee

working on the theme involving programs and future programming possibilities for Bay Path University. One list that is far too long to list is the numerous professional development sessions and trainings I have given to the Bay Path faculty community.

Historical, Philosophical and Sociocultural Foundations L01

Right click the above title link, open in a new tab or window to view ePortfolio items I will be referring to as you read along.

The paper I included, in this section, describes a small North Carolina university that has continuously transformed itself over the last 125 years and is positioned to do so as it moves forward. The historical lens with which this paper is written looks at the administrative leadership that has governed and strategized this institution's present and for a successful future. It is the application of all the qualities of this university's operations; the continuous goal-setting and strategic planning, implementation of savvy financial management, engagement in astute marketing tactics, and an unfailing courage to exercise and modify these approaches.

The second item I added is a list of leadership qualities I look for in academic leaders. One the the most important qualities is having integrity and using compassion and empathy when dealing with those they lead. Good leaders should be honest and follow the Golden Rule- treat others as one would like others to treat them.

Legal Foundations L02

Right click the above title link, open in a new tab or window to view ePortfolio items I will be referring to as you read along.

I reached back to my Building Online Learning Communities course to find examples of what might possibly be legal issues. The first item I included speaks to the factors that impact students' success and these factors can be as diverse as the students' lives. Recognizing what

factors impact student success might be a step in the direction of preventing issues to bubble up and become anything that might become a potential legal issue.

In my second example, I choose to include some discussion material from my Organization and Governance of Higher Education course. This particular discussion focused on race and gender. I think this response, which included some research I shared showing the Lean In video and accompanying Discussion Guide, was very penitent. These Lean In materials shared some great strategies for reducing bias: education, establishing clear criteria for making decisions, along with some other ideas that are great for critical thinking, and lastly one I think we forget, ‘vouch for the competence of all women-esp. women leaders. All these topics have the potential to inform administrative practice in the higher education context.

Organizational Structures and Governance L03

Right click the above title link, open in a new tab or window to view ePortfolio items I will be referring to as you read along.

Whenever I teach I like to try to use analogies as aids in the learning. As I read the Bolman and Gallos reading assignments in the MHE605Z1 Organization and Governance of Higher Education course, I thought that a joke might be an easier method to drive home the similarities and differences in governance between universities and businesses. Two college professors and a Corporate CEO walk into a bar....

In my second example I also offer an analogy to start the discussion of shared higher education governance. Around this analogy, I built a case against ‘shared governance in U.S. higher education’. I added and agreed with a then current reference from Macalester College’s President Brian Rosenberg, as he described the current model of governance on college campuses, he stated, “We have, that is, a system of sharing through division more than a system

of sharing through deep collaboration.” I predicted a day when practices of governing college campuses improve-with heavy doses of collaboration. Even now, I envision less of the hierarchical approach to decision making and more decision making that occurs across the horizontal structure of departmental structures and organizational charts. Time will tell if this organizational structure and governance will occur.

I added a third item-a case study I did on building an argument that the Center for Online and Digital Learning should move its offices to a more visible physical position on the Longmeadow campus. This might seem like a trivial argument however, our current lodging adjacent to the Bay Path IT Department leads to a lot of confusion as to what we actually do. The structure and governance, of a university is critical in functionality and I strongly believe if our department were in a more visible physical locale closer to faculty offices, we would be able to better serve them and be seen as colleagues as opposed to 'service' providers.

Organizational Leadership L04

Right click the above title link, open in a new tab or window to view ePortfolio items I will be referring to as you read along.

Much, if not most of the work I have created for the MHE program, has focused on issues I have faced within my work, department and/or division. The case study I included here looks at the impact The Center for Online and Digital Learning [CODL] has on Bay Path University. I wanted to look at the challenges my department encounters as we work to service and support faculty and students involved in hybrid and online courses.

This study examined how the CODL's work touches the traditional and graduate contingencies of the Bay Path University community. My recommendations include: promoting and implementing faculty development in the use of new pedagogical concepts, offer faculty

examples of collaborative of online student activities, improve communications with program directors and more.

The other paper, Item #2 included in this section, examines the impact and issues of collegial leadership and teamwork in the process of growing online graduate programs. As Bay Path University expands new programs, I felt it this paper was an important examination of issues that the various constituencies at Bay Path University encounter as they work to grow the online graduate programs. It really does take a collaborative effort to launch, maintain and improve any of the programs of study at Bay Path.

Lastly, I added a discussion revolving around leadership vs. managing. I felt this was an important designation to include because I do believe that leaders can be managers but not all managers are leaders.

Changing Nature of College Students L05

Right click the above title link, open in a new tab or window to view ePortfolio items I will be referring to as you read along.

In this portion of my ePortfolio, I choose to include examples representing the educational and developmental needs of the online student since this is the type of student I work with. I feel these examples represent considerations for success from the standpoint of both the online student and the online course design.

Comprehending the changing nature of the college student I serve and more particularly having the knowledge of what characteristics make up the typical Bay Path University graduate online student, helps me know how to recommend designing online courses for that type of college student. In higher education, administration, faculty and staff always need to consider our students and keep them foremost in mind as we make decisions in the work we

do.

Philosophical Assumptions and Frameworks L06

Right click the above title link, open in a new tab or window to view ePortfolio items I will be referring to as you read along.

Identifying philosophical assumptions and conceptual frameworks was an important framework to study throughout the program. As examples I included two important examples that, for me, help remind me of the importance of philosophical and conceptual frameworks used in curriculum development.

The PowerPoint [turned video] sums up and visualizes for me the theoretical frameworks and how they work within higher education- overall and with a specific lens on my own final capstone work. The second discussion example was included as it represents the organizational framework that I seemed to encounter most often in my own personal work with curriculum development: The Garbage Can Model. I will remember this framework more than any other- simply because of it's name.

Curriculum Change, Planning and Development L07

Right click the above title link, open in a new tab or window to view ePortfolio items I will be referring to as you read along.

Within this portion of my ePortfolio I wanted to include examples of what curriculum is and a final syllabus representing an example of what curriculum can be. I felt these items represent the articulation of curriculum as a process.

I work daily with curriculum and translate how curriculum is presented in the online environment and support the people who both deliver and consume the curriculum. Because of my work I attempted, during my entire program, to focus my deliverables on these topics. I

especially enjoyed creating this MFA Introduction to Publishing, Branding & Marketing syllabus. With this project I was able to pull together my skills and talents and create a solid curriculum.

Applied Research L08

Right click the above title link, open in a new tab or window to view ePortfolio items I will be referring to as you read along.

My own Capstone paper and the research was to explore the best practices and strategies instructional designers might offer online adjunct faculty at a small, private college in Massachusetts with the purpose of offering recommendations for improvement in support offered by instructional designers to online adjunct faculty.

In my work role, at Bay Path University, I also have been working on a long-term project redesigning our introduction to #teaching course. This has been a collaborative project that has involved rethinking how adjunct faculty need to be orientated to their work at Bay Path and how to best prepare them for working with programs-both on ground and online. The new #teaching course was designed and developed to model best practices for creating an online course and also encourage faculty to become familiar with digital tools they have available to them and learn how-to incorporate those tools into their teaching practices no matter the format of their course i.e. on ground, hybrid or online.

During our MHE622Z1 Foundations of Online Learning course, as part of our work, we created and kept blog entries. I have included a link to the blog, which is a portion of my [WordPress ePortfolio](#). This is something I intend to continue to keep up [post graduation] as the entry shared [and all the work involved in creating these blog posts take] took research prior to writing.

Administrative Functional Areas and Interconnectedness L09

Right click the above title link, open in a new tab or window to view ePortfolio items I will be referring to as you read along.

In this portion of my ePortfolio, I wanted to include items that represent the administrative functional areas of specifically, online teaching and learning. Here I shared an Online Faculty Toolkit, I built, a chart representing online teaching strategies and a video representing the impact of mobile learning in higher education with the lens of online learning.

Conclusion of my ePortfolio

What conclusions might someone who does not know you draw about your readiness for a higher education professional role as a result of reading your essay & reviewing your portfolio? It is my hope that those who review my ePortfolio would see the theme of online learning, design of online curriculum and support of online [and all] faculty focus running through its content. I also hope viewers see my dedication to research and thought I have put into every post, reply and deliverable. I have always tried to do my very best in my work with a lens of being a colleague to my classmates.

What do you want program faculty & administrators to know about your experience in the Bay Path graduate program in higher education administration? I have used the experience, in this graduate program, to explore ideas that are applicable directly to my work at Bay Path and more specifically my instructional design work in the Center for Online and Digital Learning. For example, whenever possible I attempted to directly apply the knowledge I was learning in my MHE courses, directly to issues and challenges we-as a department- were facing.

Another motive, for undertaking the work involved in the MHE program was to be able to experience the course of study from the perspective of a student. A very large portion of my

work, as an instructional designer, is to translate a faculty's syllabi to the online teaching and learning experience. In doing this, I need to apply empathy and think about and envision how what I am designing will be experienced-by the student. Only by actually enrolling in and working through this program, have I been able to truly see the programmatic offerings.

A strong recommendation, I feel this graduate program could benefit from, is a broader approach in allowing more student choice and freedom in choice when representing and proving knowledge of the subject material studied. From my perspective, students would benefit if given more opportunities to submit 'project-based' deliverables instead of so many written papers. In my humble opinion, this entire program could benefit from more learner-centered projects. Of course, this program has also taught me that making changes is not an easy wave of a magic wand. Requests are slow moving and require multiple layers of approvals. However, it is doable.

What do you want a current or prospective employer to know about your readiness for a new role? My hope is that current or prospective employers, by viewing this ePortfolio, would perceive my dedication to the online learning experience both from the faculty and student perspectives.

Other Thoughts:

When I reflected upon each of the course reflection essays I wrote after every course. I wanted to add that amongst all the content studied and learned, I also was given practice writing in APA style. My first Master's program required me to write in MLA style, so this was a change for me.

Additionally, studying this program has given me a vocabulary and language that help me daily in articulating my work with my colleagues, the processes and workflow and the product [of education and learning] we all produce.